

STATE OF NEW JERSEY v. MARVIN MATHIS -- January 27, 2012

SHEET 1

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY  
LAW DIVISION, CRIMINAL PART  
UNION COUNTY  
INDICTMENT NO. 97-02-0123  
APP. DIV. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF NEW JERSEY,

Plaintiff,

vs.

MARVIN MATHIS,

Defendant.

)  
)  
) TRANSCRIPT  
) of  
) P.C.R. HEARING  
)  
)  
)

Place: Union County Courthouse  
2 Broad Street  
Elizabeth, N.J. 07201

Date: January 27, 2012

BEFORE:

HONORABLE JOHN F. MALONE, J.S.C.

TRANSCRIPT ORDERED BY:

HELEN C. GODBY, ESQ. (Office of the Public Defender,  
Appellate Section, 9th Floor, 31 Clinton Street,  
Box 46003, Newark, N.J. 07101)

APPEARANCES:

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(Union County Prosecutor's Office)  
Attorney for the State

CRAIG S. LEEDS, ESQ.  
(Craig S. Leeds, Attorney at Law)  
Attorney for the Defendant

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Procedural History

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1 THE COURT: Be seated please. This is the  
2 oral argument on the P.C.R. IN THE MATTER OF STATE V  
3 MARVIN MATHIS under Indictment 97-02-123. Counsels if  
4 I may have your appearances for the record please for  
5 the State.  
6 MS. LIEBMAN: Thank you, Your Honor. I'm  
7 Sara Liebman for the State.  
8 THE COURT: Good afternoon, Ms. Liebman.  
9 MR. LEEDS: Good afternoon, Your Honor.  
10 Craig Leeds, appearing on behalf of the petitioner,  
11 Marvin Mathis. Mr. Mathis is present in Court.  
12 THE COURT: Good afternoon. All right. As I  
13 indicated this is a P.C.R. oral argument on the P.C.R.  
14 I have received the written submission on behalf of the  
15 defendant and the State. I want to assure counsel that  
16 I have reviewed them. I want to thank both counsel for  
17 the thoroughness of their presentation in connection  
18 with this matter.  
19 Just allow me to briefly indicate that the  
20 defendant was initially charged as a juvenile in  
21 connection with this matter with an armed robbery and  
22 felony murder. The State made an application for  
23 waiver of juvenile jurisdiction, which was granted. An  
24 indictment followed and on February the 4th, 1997 Mr.  
25 Mathis was indicted in a five-count indictment for

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## Procedural History

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murder, armed robbery, felony murder, possession of a weapon for unlawful purposes, and unlawful possession of a firearm.

A motion to suppress the statement that Mr. Mathis had given in connection with this matter was filed, heard by the Court, and denied. A trial, a jury trial followed following which Mr. Mathis was convicted. Sentencing occurred in this matter on August the 14th, 1998, resulting in the imposition of an aggregate sentence of 50 years in New Jersey State prison with a 30-year period of parole ineligibility and the various mandatory penalties and assessments.

The conviction was appealed. The conviction and sentence were appealed, affirmed by the Appellate Division June 2nd, 2000. A petition for certification for the Supreme Court was denied on October the 11th of 2000. A P.C.R. was filed I guess initially pro se by Mr. Mathis, assigned to counsel through the Office of Public Defender, heard by this Court and denied on February the 29th, 2008.

That denial was appealed, resulting in a reversal of the denial and a remand of the matter on October the 12th, 2010 for alternate counsel to be appointed to represent Mr. Mathis and for the matter to be re-presented to the trial court and with direction

## Procedural History

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that all of the various arguments that Mr. Mathis had included in his pro se petition be addressed by counsel and presented to the Court.

The matter then as I said has resulted in the scheduling of this proceeding and the briefs were filed by both the State and the defense in connection with the matter. Counsel for the defendant heeding the direction of the Appellate Division made a very thorough submission to the Court I think which encompasses all of the arguments raised by Mr. Mathis as well as additional arguments by counsel.

And that brief was responded to in kind by the State. So I think all of the issues have been presented to the Court and considered by me and by reviewing, I will certainly allow some additional argument, perhaps to highlight some issues if it need be. So I'll first hear on behalf of Mr. Mathis. Counsel.

MR. LEEDS: Your Honor, just by way of housekeeping, I would just note for the record that I did provide the Court just this morning just momentarily, just moments ago with some correspondence that the defendant has asked me to provide. Specifically, in terms of the procedural history that it appears his initial post conviction relief

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## Procedural History

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1 application was actually filed back in May of 2001.

2 He wanted that submitted because in the brief  
3 that I had filed I did not that it appeared he was a  
4 little bit beyond the five year time frame. I would  
5 respectfully submit that's clearly not the case. And  
6 in speaking with the State, it's my understanding that  
7 they seem to agree. And I'll let the prosecutor speak  
8 for herself.

9 But it's my understanding they seem to agree  
10 that this is, especially in light of the order from the  
11 Appellate Division that this is something that should  
12 be addressed on the merits and should not be time  
13 barred. With that being said if it pleases the Court  
14 what I would like to do for today is essentially, as  
15 Your Honor pointed out I'm going to be relying on.

16 And again to look at the housekeeping there  
17 was a brief that was filed that was dated October 11th  
18 of 2011, some 81 pages. Accompanying that was an  
19 appendix that was some 161 pages. I'm not going to  
20 begin today reading on page one and go through page 81  
21 or go into all the appendix.

22 And I would note, Judge, the appendix is  
23 substantial. It's not simply just you know procedural  
24 documents. It includes the defendant's pro se papers,  
25 which I am going to be relying on. If for some reason

## Argument - Leeds

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1 I do not cover everything here today, as Your Honor  
2 pointed out I'm simply highlighting certain aspects of  
3 the brief. And in particular if it pleases the Court  
4 what I'd like to do is highlight those reasons we would  
5 respectfully submit an evidentiary hearing is  
6 warranted.

7 But, again, I don't want there to be any  
8 suggestion that by not covering something here today,  
9 that the defendant is waiving those issues. We most  
10 emphatically are not. With that being said, Your  
11 Honor, the main jest of the defendant's petition for  
12 post conviction relief really stems from his allegation  
13 that he received the ineffective assistance of trial  
14 counsel.

15 And at different levels; at the pre-trial  
16 level, at the trial of the matter itself, and even  
17 subsequently during the sentencing phase. Beginning  
18 with the motion to suppress, the defendant raises an  
19 interesting point. And that is while he concedes that  
20 trial counsel certainly did seek to suppress the  
21 statement that he made, counsel did not raise the issue  
22 that law enforcement failed to advise the defendant  
23 that it could be prosecuted as an adult.

24 Now, certainly we would concede that that's  
25 not presently the law of New Jersey. Nonetheless, as

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## Argument - Leeds

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1 set forth in my brief there are assisted jurisdictions  
2 and in particular New Hampshire that does make it  
3 necessary for a defendant to be so advised. We would  
4 respectfully submit that the case law in New Jersey  
5 certainly does require that a defendant knowingly and  
6 intelligently waive his rights.

7 So it is respectfully submitted that it's not  
8 a far stretch to say in order for a defendant to  
9 knowingly and voluntarily waive his rights, he must  
10 know what the consequences of waiving those rights are.  
11 And in this case the defendant maintains by virtue of  
12 him having been a juvenile and subjecting himself to  
13 possibly being waived up as an adult by virtue of not  
14 being so advised, he really did not knowingly and  
15 intelligently waive his right to remain silent and to  
16 counsel.

17 In this instance, as I said trial counsel did  
18 not raise that whatsoever. Also, in that same regard  
19 at the motion to suppress, trial counsel did not raise  
20 the fact or bring to the Court's attention or call  
21 witnesses to support the assertion that the defendant  
22 had a learning disability and that he was in special  
23 education classes.

24 I would not in that regard that even the  
25 State in their brief at page eight indicates that

## Argument - Leeds

9

1 there's no dispute that the defendant was in special  
2 ed. Nonetheless, it is respectfully submitted that  
3 trial counsel should have presented such evidence. And  
4 it's particularly important because in denying the  
5 defendant's application to suppress his statement, the  
6 Court basically held and concluded that the defendant  
7 was not credible by virtue of his assertion that he  
8 didn't understand what was being read to him.

9 Well, had trial counsel presented information  
10 -- and by the way again I'm going to rely on the  
11 papers, the psychological reports, and everything else  
12 that was submitted and attached to the appendix. But  
13 the point is trial counsel was aware of this. Trial  
14 counsel had psychological reports that had been used as  
15 Your Honor has mentioned earlier, there was a juvenile  
16 waiver hearing.

17 And so at that hearing and in preparation for  
18 that hearing, counsel had retained experts. There were  
19 reports. And so it's not as if trial counsel wasn't  
20 aware of it, which it's respectfully submitted makes it  
21 that much more egregious. He knew about it yet chose  
22 not to submit it. And as I've indicated there can be  
23 no question that the defendant was prejudiced by that  
24 because in denying the motion to suppress, the Court  
25 concluded that the Judge did not find the defendant

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Argument - Leeds

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1 credible by virtue of the defendant's, among other  
2 things, his assertion that he did not understand what  
3 was being read to him.

4 Now, as I've said I'm not going to go into  
5 all the various points here today. But certainly  
6 suffice to say the defendant does raise other issues  
7 regarding ineffectiveness of trial counsel,  
8 specifically failing to object to the grand jury  
9 proceedings and the cross section of the community.  
10 The defendant maintains it was not a make up of a cross  
11 section.

12 Likewise with regard to the petite jury. The  
13 defendant maintains that blacks -- to use his term,  
14 blacks and Hispanics were under represented. And in  
15 that regard he maintains that there was an equal  
16 protection deprivation. He also notes that with regard  
17 to the juvenile waiver hearings that he maintains that  
18 other groups are less likely to be waived up, meaning  
19 African Americans, according to the defendant, he seems  
20 to believe that other groups are less likely to be  
21 waived up.

22 And, again, that would suggest that he was  
23 deprived of his fundamental right, a constitutional  
24 right I might add to equal protection under the law.  
25 Now, I've mentioned that the defendant asserts that at

Argument - Leeds

11

1 the motion suppress, there should be been some evidence  
2 presented with regard to his special education and with  
3 regard to his learning disability.

4 Well likewise, Your Honor, even taking aside  
5 the motion to suppress and even if that had been  
6 submitted and was denied, we respectfully submit that  
7 had that information been provided at the motion to  
8 suppress, the Court would have found the defendant to  
9 be more credible and likely would have granted the  
10 suppression hearing.

11 But taking that aside, even if the Court  
12 finds otherwise the defendant still could have  
13 presented such witnesses at trial. And, frankly, it's  
14 inexplicable why trial counsel wouldn't do that. And  
15 it's interesting to note that at one point during the  
16 trial -- and the Court has been provided as was the  
17 State provided with the trial proceedings, the  
18 transcripts, the minutes. I'm referring now to June  
19 11th, 1998 which if I'm not mistaken that was the  
20 morning session. And I believe that to be 2T.

21 Essentially, beginning on page 114 and then  
22 going on all the way through and up to page 117,  
23 there's quite a colloquy that takes place wherein the  
24 prosecutor actually objects to counsel making reference  
25 to the defendant even being in a special education



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Argument - Leeds

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1 class. And the prosecutor seems to opine that a  
2 curative charge was required by just making reference  
3 to special education.

4 And the reason being that according to the  
5 prosecutor an expert would have needed to be proffered.  
6 Trial counsel seemed to think that you know just  
7 calling a person from the school would suffice. But  
8 clearly it was on trial counsel's mind. So you know  
9 very often we hear well, you know, from the prosecutor  
10 that is we here well this is trial strategy. Where's  
11 the trial strategy?

12 Clearly, counsel wanted to introduce this in  
13 some way. But by virtue of counsel's ineffective  
14 representation did not do so in a competent and  
15 adequate way. Certainly, Judge, the defendant's state  
16 of mind and limited in this case special education and  
17 being learning disabled was relevant. And I would not  
18 that in this particular case, it was of a special  
19 importance because the defendant actually testified.

20 And there's case law I've submitted. And I'm  
21 referring now to pages 52 and 53, State v Sexton, for  
22 example, where it's submitted that the defendant was  
23 essentially -- and what I'd like to do here is actually  
24 quote a little bit from State v Sexton, "however, we  
25 think it's only fair in the event of a re-trial that

Argument - Leeds

13

1 the defendant have the opportunity upon proper notice  
2 to the State to offer relevant experts and/or  
3 appropriate school personnel who may be able to fairly  
4 describe defendant's mental ability."

5 Now, I won't read the whole quote. It's  
6 there on page 52 of the brief. But essentially the  
7 Court in that case noted that there was extensive  
8 psychological expert testimony at the juvenile waiver  
9 hearing although no expert testimony was presented at  
10 trial. Well, that's exactly what we have here. The  
11 sa-- I mean you talk about a case that's right on  
12 point, that's exactly what we have here.

13 And the Court in that particular case said  
14 look just because the defendant is waived up doesn't  
15 mean you can't then bring in those witnesses to  
16 establish the facts upon which those experts relied.  
17 And in this instance that's exactly what the defendant  
18 is asserting. That it still would have helped the jury  
19 to assess the defendant's testimony. And by the way  
20 for that matter the same thing at the motion to  
21 suppress.

22 It would have helped the Court in assessing  
23 the credibility of the defendant. And in this case by  
24 virtue of trial counsel's ineffective representation,  
25 that did not happen. Now, as I've said we're alleging

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## Argument - Leeds

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ineffectiveness of trial counsel, not only at the pre-trial stage and at the trial level as well, but even right up and through sentencing. The defendant maintains that the sentence is excessive.

Now, certainly we do recognize -- and by the way aside from excessive sentence, the defendant in his pro se papers -- and I've alluded to that in my brief -- also maintains that there's constitutional issues here in terms of finding certain factors. I'll rely on the papers there. But with regard to the mitigating factors, it's respectfully submitted that there were certain factors that were present in this case that were not found by the Court.

And, again, I'll rely on the brief but, for example, mitigating factors number eight, mitigating factor number nine. There was also mitigating factor number four, mitigating factor number eleven. And the reasons that we say so are stated within the four corners of the brief. What I would point out is at one point during the sentencing hearing, incredibly enough counsel actually alludes to witnesses that he could have called. I mean it's really quite remarkable.

Judge, I could have called this; I could have called that but I didn't. That's -- I mean it's quoted on page 59 of my brief the exactly language, "I think

## Argument - Leeds

15

two teachers tried or attempted to testify as to his good character. There were other teachers present that weren't called." And it goes on. But essentially nobody was called that could have been called at the time of sentencing.

And, again, given the defendant's the fact that he was as I've already explained had a special education class and he was learning disabled, these are things that the Court could have and should have taken into account at the time of sentencing. Now, certainly the defendant's youth is another example. Now, I mention that one because we recognize that is not a statutory mitigating factor.

Nonetheless, the defendant's youth is something that the Court can take into account. And I would cite State v Dunbar, recognizing that a defendant's relevant youth ordinarily would enure to his benefit. And holding that the youth of a defendant may be considered as a mitigating factor even though there was no evidence he was influenced by an older person.

But guess what, in this case he was influenced by an older person. And, again, that's all set forth in the papers that were submitted in support of the defendant's present petition for post conviction



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Argument - Leeds

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1 relief. What I would note, Your Honor, is that while  
 2 we certainly recognize that the Court can give whatever  
 3 weight it wants to in terms of mitigating and  
 4 aggravating factors, certainly the Court should not --  
 5 the Court must find mitigating factors that are present  
 6 in the case.

7 And it's respectfully submitted in this case  
 8 the Court did not do that. And I'm citing State v  
 9 Dazio (phonetic). And in that case -- and that's on  
 10 page 61 of the brief -- but essentially that case holds  
 11 for the proposition that if there are mitigating  
 12 factors supported by the record, the Court must find  
 13 those mitigating factors.

14 Again, we recognize that the Court can give  
 15 whatever weight it deems appropriate. But to simply  
 16 disregard or not give the defendant any weight  
 17 whatsoever for mitigating factors that are clearly  
 18 present in the case would be improper. So essentially,  
 19 Judge, the defendant is maintaining that he received  
 20 the ineffective assistance of trial counsel. As I've  
 21 said, typically the prosecution will very often say  
 22 this was trial strategy.

23 What possible trial strategy could there be  
 24 in not calling experts at that motion to suppress. Or  
 25 to make matters worse, at the trial. The defendant's

Argument - Leeds

17

1 attorney was certainly aware of these experts. And it  
 2 clearly impacted not only on the motion to suppress and  
 3 denying the defendant's application, but also in  
 4 ultimately the defendant being found guilty as opposed  
 5 to had the jury been given the benefit of those experts  
 6 and been made aware of special education and what that  
 7 means.

8 And, also, in terms of the psychological  
 9 reports that counsel was aware of. Again, it's not a  
 10 situation where he didn't know about it. That's what  
 11 makes it that much more egregious. To know about it  
 12 and then not use them. And so for all of those reasons  
 13 we would respectfully submit that Your Honor could  
 14 grant his application outright, finding a per se  
 15 ineffectiveness.

16 But certainly and in the alternative we would  
 17 request an evidentiary hearing. We would respectfully  
 18 submit that the defendant has certainly and at a  
 19 minimum made a prima facie case of ineffective  
 20 assistance of counsel, thereby requiring an evidentiary  
 21 hearing.

22 Finally, Judge, I would just note that the  
 23 State in its opposition papers did state quite a few  
 24 times that, you know, these are issues that could have  
 25 been raised on appeal. These are issues that could

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Argument - Leeds

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1 have been raised on direct appeal. To the extent that  
 2 Your Ho-- and in some respects the State is right. But  
 3 if the Court were to find that, yes, these are issues  
 4 that could have been raised on appeal it almost, you  
 5 know, and the State making that argument they're almost  
 6 helping to prove our case.

7 Because one of the things we also allege in  
 8 point six of the brief -- of counsel's brief, is that  
 9 the defendant received ineffective assistance of  
 10 appellate counsel. Well, here's the State saying this  
 11 could have and should have been raised and it wasn't,  
 12 so he's barred. Well, what better proof of  
 13 ineffectiveness of appellate counsel than from the  
 14 State's opposition saying it could have been raised on  
 15 direct appeal and it wasn't.

16 And so it sort of proves the point. And so  
 17 to the extent that the Court finds any issues here  
 18 should be procedurally barred by virtue of appellate  
 19 counsel not raising those issues, we would ask the  
 20 Court to find that appellate counsel was indeed  
 21 ineffectiveness. And so for that reason we would ask  
 22 Your Honor to address these issues on the merits,  
 23 taking into account the ineffectiveness of trial and  
 24 appellate counsel.

25 THE COURT: Thank you, counsel.

Argument - Leeds

19

1 MR. LEEDS: Thank you, Judge.

2 THE COURT: Ms. Liebman.

3 MS. LIEBMAN: Thank you, Your Honor. Just  
 4 one thing. Just to be clear the Appellate Division  
 5 remanded for this hearing. The remand had nothing to  
 6 do with the merits of the Court's decision. I just  
 7 want to make sure the record is clear. It had to do  
 8 with defendant's prior P.C.R. counsels' presentation.  
 9 So it's not as if the Court took any issue with they  
 10 didn't rule on it. But they didn't have any quarrel  
 11 with or make any ruling with regard to the merits of  
 12 the Court's decision, denying the petition for post  
 13 conviction relief.

14 Turning now to the argument, I'll be brief,  
 15 Your Honor. First, with regard to many of the  
 16 procedural bars that the State cited were claims that  
 17 actually were raised in the Appellate Division. And,  
 18 therefore, they're barred because the defendant can't  
 19 re-litigate them. And to the extent that the State  
 20 argued that some claims were procedurally barred  
 21 because they could have and should have been raised on  
 22 direct appeal, in our brief we also addressed the  
 23 merits.

24 And in addition to being procedurally barred,  
 25 all of the defendant's claims lack merit and he has not

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Argument - Liebman

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1 met his burden on any of the claims. The main claim  
 2 seems to be that evidence of the defendant's lower  
 3 intellect or perhaps mental deficiency was not  
 4 presented. First of all the -- counsel's argument  
 5 presupposes that he has experts that would have  
 6 established that the defendant had a diminished  
 7 capacity defense or that it would have been relevant to  
 8 his issue in understanding his Miranda warnings and  
 9 giving a statement.

10 And the State submits that that simply is not  
 11 the case. As pointed out in the State's brief, there  
 12 were three expert reports. The State also did have an  
 13 expert. Even the defense experts don't conclusively  
 14 establish or make any conclusive or unequivocal  
 15 statement that the defendant had any issues  
 16 understanding and making decisions and knowing what he  
 17 was doing and knowing the consequences of his actions.

18 And I would also submit, Your Honor, that the  
 19 fact that the defendant was able to produce his -- he  
 20 submitted a pro se brief, the first P.C.R. I don't  
 21 know if it was the same one this time. But certainly  
 22 he has a grasp of the legal issues. And to the extent  
 23 that he was in special ed, yes, the State's not  
 24 disputing that.

25 But it's a huge difference from being in

Argument - Liebman

21

1 special ed or requiring special education to not  
 2 knowing what you're doing or not understanding what the  
 3 police were telling you when they were talking to you  
 4 when you were giving a statement and when your mother  
 5 was present during the conversation.

6 And as set forth fully in our brief, the  
 7 findings that the Court made at the motion to suppress  
 8 were certainly grounded in the credible evidence. And  
 9 there's nothing showing that had any other information  
 10 or expert testimony been presented that that would have  
 11 changed the result further.

12 Even giving the defendant all the benefit and  
 13 saying okay the confession would have been suppressed,  
 14 there was still substantial evidence of the defendant's  
 15 guilt. And he's not able to show that had counsel been  
 16 able to present expert testimony that would have  
 17 established for the Court that the defendant was  
 18 incapable of understanding and waiving his Miranda  
 19 rights and that his statement wouldn't have been  
 20 admissible.

21 And, again, the State had an expert that said  
 22 that that was not the case. So you would have had at  
 23 best a battle of the experts. But even had he been  
 24 able to establish that, and even had the Court  
 25 suppressed the confession, there still was substantial

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Argument - Liebman

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1 and overwhelming evidence of his guilt and the verdict  
 2 would have been the same. And that's the standard that  
 3 he has to meet. And he has not. He just has not do  
 4 so, Your Honor.

5 For the rest of the argument, I'll rely on  
 6 the brief. In conclusion, the defendant has not  
 7 satisfied his burden. He has not set forth even a  
 8 prima facie case of ineffective assistance of counsel.  
 9 His petition should be denied without an evidentiary  
 10 hearing. Thank you.

11 MR. LEEDS: Your Honor, if I may briefly  
 12 respond.

13 THE COURT: Very briefly.

14 MR. LEEDS: The State had mentioned just  
 15 moments ago diminished capacity that the experts do not  
 16 find diminished capacity. I just want to note, again  
 17 referring to page 52 of my brief, we're not suggesting  
 18 here that the defendant had a diminished capacity or an  
 19 insanity defense.

20 Nonetheless, under State v Sexton 311 N.J.  
 21 Super 70, an Appellate Division 1998 case, the Court  
 22 concluded that the defendant's mental condition may  
 23 nonetheless be admitted as evidence at trial. And,  
 24 again, I'm just going to quote this and then I'll sit  
 25 down. This is a quote from State v Sexton. "We note

Argument - Liebman/Leeds

23

1 that despite extensive psychological expert testimony  
 2 at the waiver hearing, no expert testimony was offered  
 3 at trial.

4 "Under those circumstances, it was within the  
 5 trial judge's discretion either to admit or to exclude  
 6 defendant's and his mother's testimony regarding his  
 7 school placement. The trial judge found the proffer so  
 8 vague as to be more prejudicial and confusing and  
 9 relevant. However, we think it's only fair in the  
 10 event of a retrial that the defendant had the  
 11 opportunity upon proper notice to the State to offer  
 12 relevant experts and/or appropriate school personnel  
 13 who may be able to fairly describe a defendant's mental  
 14 ability."

15 Again, Judge, we're not suggesting here  
 16 today, we don't want to be disingenuous to suggest  
 17 there was a diminished capacity defense. What we are  
 18 suggesting is that nonetheless and as conceded in the  
 19 State's brief, the defendant was in special education.  
 20 He had a learning disability. And that is something  
 21 that the Jury should have been made aware of because it  
 22 sheds light on the way he testified. And he did  
 23 testify at trial. Thank you, Your Honor.

24 THE COURT: All right. A couple of things  
 25 bear nothing before getting into the substance of the

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## Argument - Leeds

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1 application before the Court. This is largely a P.C.R.  
 2 based upon the contention of ineffective assistance of  
 3 counsel. The Strickland test, the two prong test in  
 4 Strickland is that it guides the Court in considering  
 5 such application. It is incumbent upon the defendant  
 6 to demonstrate that counsel not only committed errors,  
 7 but did so committed errors of such a serious nature  
 8 that counsel was not functioning as the attorney  
 9 required under the Sixth Amendment.

10 And, secondly, that there is a reasonable  
 11 probability but for those errors, those serious errors  
 12 by trial counsel the result would have been different.  
 13 There are also some court rules that apply in most  
 14 P.C.R.'s that are worth noting. Rule 3:22-4 speaks to  
 15 the issue of matters which might have been or could  
 16 have been raised at the Appellate level as constituting  
 17 a bar to a P.C.R.

18 And I think significantly in this case Rule  
 19 3:22-5, those issues which were raised on appeal and  
 20 the bar to attempting to re-litigate those issues  
 21 through the P.C.R. process. I agree there is not a  
 22 procedural bar here based on time. This is a remand.  
 23 And I appreciate the prosecutor pointing out it was not  
 24 for errors by the trial court but rather deficiencies  
 25 of P.C.R. counsel. But it doesn't raise an issue that

## Findings

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1 this is some way barred by time, the timeliness of this  
 2 application.

3 Largely, this is a claim of ineffective  
 4 assistance of counsel related to the claim that counsel  
 5 failed to raise the learning disability and special  
 6 education status of the defendant. And it is contended  
 7 that that failure occurred at three stages of the  
 8 proceedings. And the juvenile court when the waiver to  
 9 adult court occurred, during the Miranda proceeding,  
 10 and at the time of sentence. Let me back up. At the  
 11 Miranda and the trial and then again at sentencing.

12 With respect to the contention that the  
 13 failure to raise a learning disability or special ed  
 14 status, constituting ineffective assistance, the Court  
 15 notes that in reviewing the record, it does not find  
 16 that there are any facts from which it could be  
 17 demonstrated that the fact that the defendant was  
 18 learning disabled or was a special ed student was  
 19 sufficient to show that he had a mental deficiency that  
 20 would some way render him incapable of or impairing his  
 21 ability to participate in this case.

22 There is nothing that indicates that he was  
 23 disabled so that he could not knowingly and voluntarily  
 24 waive his Miranda rights. That somehow that special ed  
 25 status would have affected his waiver hearing in



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juvenile court, his participation in the trial, or even affect the sentencing. We are not without a record here. There was a waiver proceeding in the juvenile court. There was a psychologist involved in that proceeding.

And again the conclusion of the court is that there was not evidence that the mental deficiency was so severe that the absence of his presentation would have affected the outcome of the proceeding. There is nothing to show that reasonable probability but for the failure to present that evidence, the result somehow would have been different.

And with respect to the other various, there are other issues raised in his P.C.R. It is contended, for example, that the waiver was improperly granted. The Court notes that that wasn't a matter that was previously before the Appellate Division and is then subject to the bar of Rule 3:22-5.

There is a suggestion that there is some equal protection argument that relates to the juvenile waiver. But, again, there is based upon the contention of the disparate application of the waiver rules, but there is nothing in the record that suggests that in the applicability of that argument in this particular case or that had the argument been made that somehow

## Findings

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would have affected the outcome.

There is a contention that the Miranda, that the determination in the Miranda case was improper. That it should not have been granted separate and apart from the failure, the learning disability aspect of this P.C.R. That is certainly something that could have been raised on appeal. But even not considering the procedural bar, that it could have been adjudicated.

There is nothing here again that would suggest that anything could have been presented, should have been presented that would have affected the outcome of the Miranda hearing. The P.C.R. further include issues with respect to the sentence, other than the learning disability and special ed status argument. It is suggested, for example, that the sentence exceeded the maximum.

The sentence here was 50 years to State prison which is well within the range of those sentences available for a First Degree murder conviction. There is a suggestion that there may have been a Blakely type issue here. However, as the State pointed out, there is no presumption of a particular sentence in connection with this offense.

There is the suggestion of some other

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1 procedural defect based upon arguments, Apprendi type  
2 arguments. But, again, no demonstration as to how that  
3 would have affected the sentence in this matter.  
4 There's a suggestion in the P.C.R. that the grand jury  
5 proceeding was deficient based upon equal protection  
6 arguments.

7 Again, it is not developed or demonstrated as  
8 to how that would have affected the outcome of this  
9 matter. There is simply nothing that indicates to the  
10 Court that errors committed by trial counsel, if there  
11 were any, were such a substantial nature so that it is  
12 reasonably probably that the results would have been  
13 different.

14 I must conclude that there has not been a  
15 prima facie showing of ineffective assistance of  
16 counsel demonstrated in this case from which the Court  
17 could determine, should determine that a hearing is  
18 required. This P.C.R. application is denied. Thank  
19 you, counsel.

20 MR. LEEDS: Thank you, Your Honor. Will the  
21 State be submitting an order, or would you like me to,  
22 Your Honor.

23 THE COURT: I'll send it to you.

24 MR. LEEDS: Okay.

25 MS. LIEBMAN: Thank you, Judge.

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1 MR. LEEDS: Thank you, Judge.

2 THE COURT: You're welcome.

3 (Proceedings Concluded)

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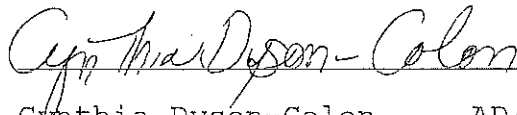
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CERTIFICATION

1  
2 I, Cynthia Dyson-Colon, the assigned  
3 transcriber, do hereby certify that the foregoing  
4 transcript of proceedings on January 27, 2012 in the  
5 Union County Superior Court, digitally recorded, Time  
6 Index 12:07 to 12:45, is prepared in full compliance  
7 with the current Transcript Format for Judicial  
8 Proceedings and is a true and accurate compressed  
9 transcript of the proceedings as recorded, to the best  
10 of my knowledge and ability.

11

12



13 Cynthia Dyson-Colon AD/T#560

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September 11, 2012